



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

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PRESS RELEASE

Jerry Patterson promotes 'Voices of Veterans' coordinator to Major in Marine Reserves

New Leander father grateful to have a ceremony close to home

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AUSTIN —

Texas General Land Office employee James Crabtree was given a promotion by Commissioner Jerry Patterson today – but not for his meritorious service with the Land Office.

Crabtree, a Leander-area resident and the coordinator of GLO's Veterans Land Board "Voices of Veterans" program, was promoted to Major in the Marine Reserves by Commissioner Patterson. The celebration took place Friday afternoon, Sept. 27, at the Stephen F. Austin State Office Building in the Texas Capitol Complex.

Patterson, a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the Marine Reserves, read the oath.

Maj. Crabtree, whose fourth child was born three days after, was content to be feted by co-workers and friends locally. His Reserve unit is based in Grand Prairie, a Dallas-Fort Worth area suburb. Crabtree said that would have required a three-hour drive both ways with his expecting wife, Meredith, and three kids, Hannah, 6, Caroline, 3, and Gracie, 2. (Update: Jack Artemas Crabtree was born 7:26 a.m. Monday, at 8 lbs., 7 oz. and 19 inches.)

The promotion was originally scheduled for earlier this month, Crabtree said, but his doctor said "no way" to the travel plans. So he attended a small, official promotion ceremony with his Battalion in Grand Prairie, while saving the celebration for Austin.

"It really means a lot to me to have all of you here," Crabtree said. "Really, this promotion is as much Meredith's as it is mine."

The proclamation from the President of the United States was read by Capt. Jeff Williford, a Marine Reservist and employee of the adjacent Texas Veterans Commission. Also in attendance was Crabtree's father, Jerry Crabtree, and many colleagues from the General Land Office and the Marine Reserves.

Crabtree was picked to head up the Texas Veterans Land Board oral history program, "Voices of Veterans," in 2007, upon his return from deployment in Iraq. Crabtree joined the Marine Reserves in 1997 as a student at University of Texas at Austin.

Patterson also joined the Marine Corps Reserve while a student, later serving in Vietnam. Patterson continued to serve into his first term as a Texas Senator in 1993.

Crabtree oversees the first state-level effort to record the first-hand stories of Texas veterans and archive the transcripts in the Office of Veterans Records for future research. Recordings made join the historic documents of other Texas heroes such as Sam Houston, David Crockett, Jim Bowie, and William Barrett Travis.

Any veteran interested in including his or her story in the Voices of Veterans program should contact Crabtree via the Texas Veterans Land Board at 1-800-252-VETS (8387), or by sending an e-mail to vlbinfo@glo.texas.gov.

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